



# Reclaim

Welcome to  
New Bike City



## PUBLISHER'S LETTER

## The Right to Yell

I have a confession: I yell at drivers all the time. I yell when they come too close to my daughter Anna when we're biking to school, or when they don't stop for me in the crosswalk.

In March, a postman named Glen Grays did what I do all the time. Stepping out of his mail truck, he was nearly side-swiped — a scary close call — and he yelled at the driver.

Since I'm a white guy, what happens when I shout at a driver (absolutely nothing) is not what happened to Mr. Grays. He was arrested, even though he was in uniform, in the middle of his route, and had done nothing wrong — besides being black and upset at the callous disregard he received from a driver who happened to be a police officer.

I imagine it was terrible, mortifying and enraging for Mr. Grays. I certainly felt all those things when I read the story in the newspaper. I want to live in a city where you are allowed to be outraged when someone endangers your life, where you can yell at a reckless driver, regardless of your race, or the status of the person behind the wheel.

A few weeks before Mr. Grays was arrested, Transportation Alternatives hosted the second-ever Vision Zero Cities Conference, a three-day gathering at NYU of people from around the world working to reduce traffic fatalities. For the event, an old friend came to town, an urban planner from Mexico City who, on the weekends, likes to put on a luchador mask and yell at dangerous drivers. He calls himself Peatónito, or "little pedestrian," even though he's large and kind of intimidating when he pushes cars out of the crosswalk.

While he was in town, I took Peatónito to Times Square, and he went out to Corona, Queens, with some TransAlt activists and Clarence Eckerson from Streetfilms. When the man in a wrestling mask started yelling at drivers, others followed his lead; it was remarkable to watch (and you can, just search Google for "Peatónito + Streetfilms"). He shined a light on what drivers were doing wrong, and people walking by felt permission to get mad and yell, too.

Later that same week, New York Police Department Commissioner William Bratton was scheduled to give opening remarks at the Vision Zero Cities Conference. When I first announced that Commissioner Bratton was speaking, a lot of my friends called to yell at me. I understood: Stories like that of Mr. Grays are too common under the watch of our current police commissioner, and his Vision Zero efforts have been lackluster at best. But I thought if we gave him the microphone, he would be forced to present a better face, or a bigger plan, or some new way that he hoped to make traffic safety a priority for his officers.

I was wrong.

Instead of outlining a plan to get Vision Zero back on course, Bratton questioned the very foundations of Vision Zero, refused to consider increasing the number of crash investigations, and, contradicting his own mayor and department, who have instilled prevention in their own powerful vernacular, insisted on sticking with the outmoded term "accident." Luckily, cameras were rolling.

Our response was swift, and because the room was full of press, later that day a pack of reporters asked Mayor de Blasio to explain Bratton's undermining remarks. The Mayor was forced to acknowledge the dissonance between him and his commissioner, but he reiterated his commitment to real Vision Zero.

After Mr. Grays' arrest and release, Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams decried the incident at a press conference with the postal worker's family. Because, luckily, someone on the street recorded what happened on their phone, Police Commissioner Bratton was pressured to express his disappointment in the officers, stripping the NYPD lieutenant who arrested Mr. Grays of his badge and gun.

I've always been struck by a quote from former Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis. "Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants," he wrote in a 1913 *Harper's Weekly* article titled "What Publicity Can Do."

Bringing outrageous views out into the open is a critical first step on the road to making change. Sometimes sunlight is shaking your fist, sometimes it's getting it on camera, sometimes it's handing over the microphone to see what happens. I pray that no one else has to be unlawfully arrested in order to shine that light. Like our streets, New York City has a lot of room for improvement; that starts with everyone seeing what's really going on.



Sincerely,

Paul Steely White  
Executive Director



PHOTO OF THE ISSUE

## Bike Lane Hooray!



Activists celebrate after Manhattan Community Board 7 approves a two-mile-long protected bike lane for Amsterdam Avenue, the cheer-ful end to a three-year campaign backed by 3,000 neighbors and more than 200 local businesses.

Our mission is to reclaim New York City's streets from the automobile, and to advocate for bicycling, walking and public transit as the best transportation alternatives.

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## LOCAL NEWS

# Milestones

## QUEENS BOULEVARD PART DEUX

After a decade-long campaign by TransAlt activists in Queens, the Department of Transportation laid down Phase One of a major redesign of Queens Boulevard in the fall, including a protected green bike lane that's been packed since the paint dried. Now, local activists are paying close attention to the conversation about the next leg, where the redesign extends into Elmhurst. The DOT's plans for Phase Two are expected to be approved by Community Board 4, and the ribbon cut on those improved travel conditions this summer.



Andrew Hinderaker

## PROTECTED GETS POPULAR

Bike lanes with built-in protection are the hot trend on New York City streets, with new lanes installed or soon-to-be on Amsterdam Avenue, Chrystie Street, Jay Street, 6th Avenue and the Pulaski Bridge, and the DOT announcing plans to break the record of protected bike lane miles installed in 2016. Anyone who's tried the protected lanes — with a path of green asphalt adjacent to the curb and a lane of parked cars separating cyclists from traffic — gets why this is the new go-to design. Since New York City installed the nation's first protected bike lane in 2008, they've been shown to reduce crashes, injuries and sidewalk bicycling, and they make female cyclists more likely to ride. The protected bike lane trend is national, according to PeopleForBikes' Green Lane Project; their number in the U.S. quadrupled over the past six years.



NYC DOT



Lao Fios



## VISION ZERO CITIES

What do a Mexican superhero, Uber executives and Janette Sadik-Khan have in common? The second ever Vision Zero Cities Conference, where all were on hand to discuss the global movement to end traffic deaths and serious injuries. Attendees from 36 cities shared local efforts to save lives over three days at NYU's Kimmel Center. While Peatónito (a masked superhero who defends Mexico City pedestrians) was in town, he showed off his superpowers at some of NYC's worst intersections: pushing cars out of the crosswalk in Jackson Heights and helping Desnudas cross the street in Times Square. Missed the conference? You can check out the paper version by grabbing a copy of *Vision Zero Cities Journal* at [visionzerocities.org](http://visionzerocities.org).



Rose Uscianowski



## ACTIVISTS: THE NEW CLASS

Transportation Alternatives' staff organizers are well-known in political circles for efficacy and pizzazz, and this winter, they launched a mini-university to share their knowhow. The first free, day-long session in TransAlt's downtown office was so sought-after that more than triple the possible capacity applied to attend; then, the second overflow session filled up immediately. All told, more than 140 people participated in an anti-oppression training, and learned the ins-and-outs of community organizing and managing a successful political campaign. Future sessions planned for this summer will focus on specific topics like social media and coalition building.

## ACTIVIST PROFILE

# Dorothy Kiều Lê and Boris Suchkov



## What do you do?

**Boris:** I'm a Principal Transportation Planner for New York City Transit. I do data analysis having to do with performance, mostly on the subway.

**Dorothy:** I work for the Neighborhood Plaza Partnership as the Director of Capacity Building. I help the community groups that manage plazas. We're both urban planners.

## And you two are engaged, right? How did you meet?

**Boris:** We met at a Transportation Alternatives meeting.

## No way! Really?

**Dorothy:** Yeah! This is why Transportation Alternatives is so near and dear to our hearts.

**Boris:** I was living on Staten Island, and Dorothy moved there for a fellowship with the National Park Service.

**Dorothy:** We met in August 2012 at a Staten Island Activist Committee meeting.

**Boris:** Then, we forgot about each other. Or the next time I saw her, I didn't recognize her. A month later, on the Staten Island Ferry, I started talk-

ing to her, asking her questions about her bike, without realizing we'd met before.

**Dorothy:** At first, I was like, "Oh great, a guy asking me about my bicycle, this is kind of weird." But he actually cared about buying a bicycle. So I was like, "You can go to Recycle-a-Bicycle if you want a used bike. I really like Bicycle Habitat, blah blah blah." Then, as we started walking out of the ferry, we realized we were going to the same exact place, the Staten Island Activist Committee meeting. We were friends for a year after that and then finally started dating.

## That's too cute. What did you work on with the Staten Island Committee?

**Boris:** I ran a side project involving wayfinding signs for the neighborhood. I got the Activist of the Year Award for that. That was pretty cool because it was just an independent thing I thought up and was able to run with it because activist committee meetings provided this monthly forum for different ideas.

**Dorothy:** That's the thing, Transportation Alternatives just brings together

a lot of cool people who are involved in their community in different ways, not just biking and walking. So monthly, Boris had access to a group of people who could help him figure out who to talk to, where would be the best locations, how to publicize. Even though Transportation Alternatives is a larger group, it's like a community organization within those neighborhoods.

## As TransAlt volunteers, what would you say to encourage folks to get involved?

**Boris:** If you ever felt there's something wrong with the city, especially in terms of transportation, and you didn't know if there were other people who think the same way, Transportation Alternatives is a great place to realize that problem might be on the minds of several people. They might even know how to fix it, or have contacts who can be reached out to, or just to talk about it is good.

## And maybe you'll find love?

**Dorothy:** I have a lot of single friends always telling me that they can't meet good people, dating sucks, whatever. I tell them to get involved in something that they're passionate about and they will naturally meet cool people. I am not saying to volunteer as a way to date, that's weird, but it's a great way to express yourself and meet people who are interested in the world. If you're looking to contribute to your community and leave your neighborhood just a little better than how you came to it, then get involved in Transportation Alternatives. ■

IN ADVANCE OF THEIR WEDDING, DOROTHY AND BORIS ASKED THEIR GUESTS TO MAKE A DONATION TO TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES IN LIEU OF GIFTS.

You can send good tidings too: [transalt.org/dorothyandboris](https://transalt.org/dorothyandboris).

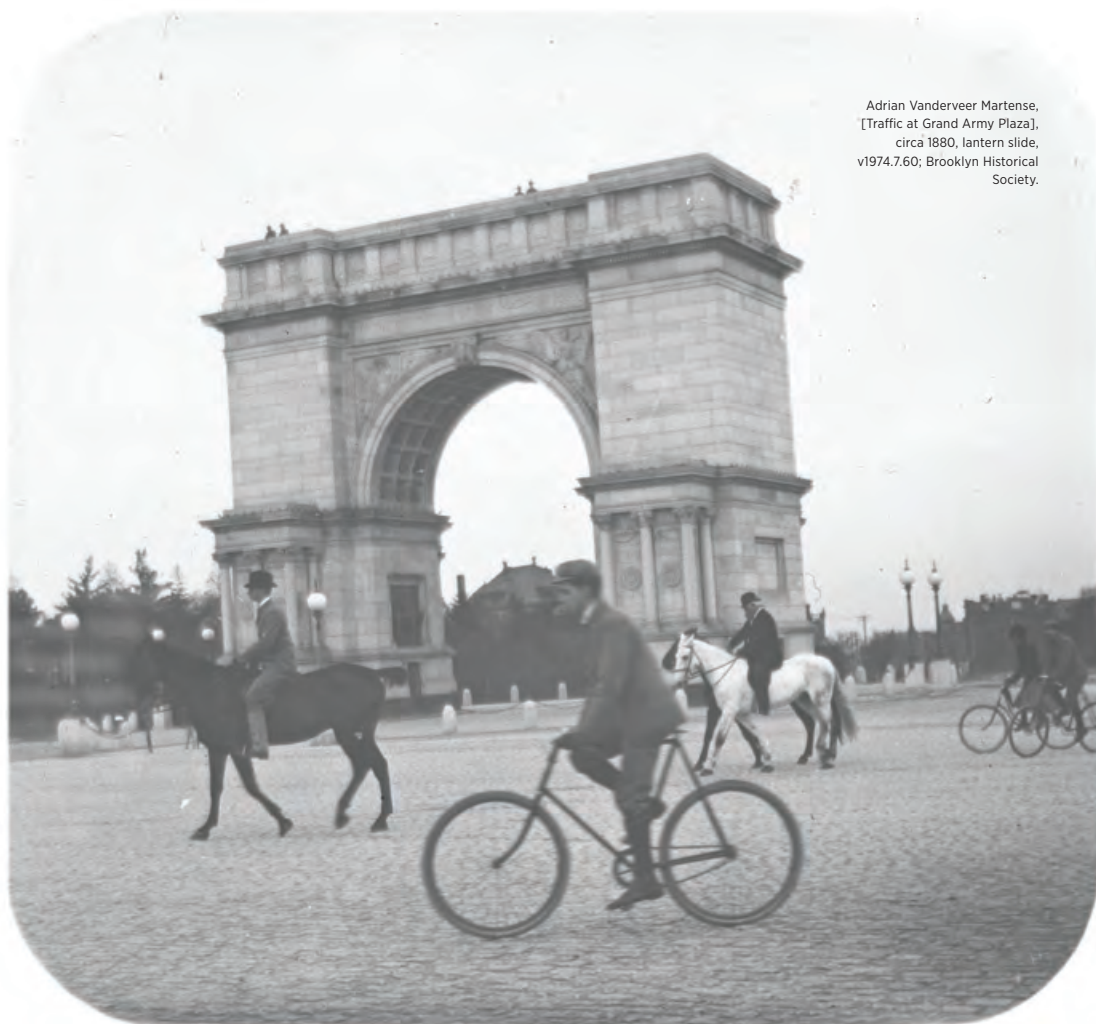


## BIKE CULTURE

# Brooklyn Bike History

IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY, advances in manufacturing made the bicycle suddenly accessible and affordable to average New Yorkers. Bicycle riding became wildly popular, and streets increasingly chaotic, with cyclists sharing unpaved road with horseback riders, horse-drawn carriages and streetcars.

*Reclaim* teamed up with Brooklyn Historical Society to celebrate ye olde velocipeders of yore, and peek back at a century of bicycling in New York. You can visit Brooklyn Historical Society, open Wednesday to Sunday from noon to 5 pm at 128 Pierrepont Street, or at [brooklynhistory.org](http://brooklynhistory.org).



Adrian Vanderveer Martense, [Traffic at Grand Army Plaza], circa 1880, lantern slide, v1974.7.60; Brooklyn Historical Society.



Ruth and Hazel Shellens outside their family home in Sunset Park with a ladies safety bicycle. The lowered crossbar made bicycling more accessible to women.

[Two Young Girls on a Bike], circa 1910, photographic print, v1988.486.28; Brooklyn Historical Society.



Alfred Cranston (right) in the backyard of his home on Quincy Street; his high socks were common cycling gear at the time.

Alfred Cranston, [Untitled], circa 1890, glass plate negative, v1994.013; Brooklyn Historical Society.

The Vernon Avenue Bridge opened in 1905 and was demolished in 1954 to make way for the Pulaski Bridge. Cyclists would likely have had to pay a toll to cross.

Eugene L. Armbruster, [Vernon Avenue Bridge on Greenpoint side, Bushwick], 1923, gelatin silver prints, V1974.1.222; Brooklyn Historical Society.



represented. I was directed to respectfully call before your notice the dangerous condition - due to poor and broken pavement - of the following streets and intersections. Beford ave. from Division to Flushing ave; 60th street, cross-walks on 4th ave., crossing at Utica ave. and Eastern Parkway and St Marks ave. & 5th ave.

Pothole locations are listed in a letter from the Associated Cycling Clubs of Long Island to the Corporation Counsel of New York.

Associated Cycling Clubs of Long Island, 1898. Brooklyn, N.Y., Department of Law, Corporation Counsel records, 2013.015; Brooklyn Historical Society.

## Associated Cycling Clubs of Long Island:

BROOKLYN BICYCLE CLUB.	LONG ISLAND WHEELMEN.	TAMAQUA WHEELMEN.
BUSHWICK WHEELMEN.	LONG ISLAND CITY WHEELMEN.	(of Jamaica, L. I.)
CENTRAL WHEELMEN.	NASSAU WHEELMEN.	UNION LEAGUE WHEELMEN.
COLUMBIA WHEELMEN.	ORIENT WHEELMEN.	WAVERLY BICYCLE CLUB.
CYCLE CLUB OF BROOKLYN.	PARAMOUNT WHEELMEN.	WHEELING SECTION, 25th REGT.
INDIAN CYCLE CLUB.	PATCHOGUE WHEELMEN.	WILLIAMSBURGH WHEELMEN.
KINGS COUNTY WHEELMEN.	PEQUOD WHEELMEN.	WHIRLING DERVISHES.
LIBERTY WHEELMEN.	PROSPECT WHEELMEN.	GREATER NEW YORK
LOGAN WHEELMEN.	SOUTH BROOKLYN WHEELMEN.	WHEELMEN

Before automobiles were common, local "wheelmen" organized cycling clubs to finance the paving of the first asphalt roads in New York City.

Associated Cycling Clubs of Long Island letterhead, Legal Notes, 1897. Brooklyn, N.Y., Department of Law, Corporation Counsel records, 2013.015; Brooklyn Historical Society.



Walter Hull Aldridge, Coney Island '89, 1889, photographic print, V1972.1.808; Brooklyn Historical Society.



# bicycle habitat

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## PUBLIC SAFETY

## A Vaccine for Speeding

THIS WINTER, OLLIE OLIVER SPENT a lot of time flagging down New Yorkers. At the Whitehall Ferry Terminal, near the Willis Avenue Bridge, at Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn or outside the Whole Foods on the Upper West Side, he had the same question for anyone who would stop: How would you feel if you got a ticket from a speed enforcement camera?

“Overwhelmingly, people’s answers were the same. It surprised me, because in Albany, politicians always act like speed cameras are this controversial thing,” said Oliver, Transportation Alternatives’ Manhattan Organizer. “One person told me that if you do wrong, you need to pay the price. Another said that they would be upset, but shouldn’t have been speeding. Most people told me that they would feel stupid if they got a ticket from a speed camera because they don’t want to hurt anyone.”

In his poll of 100 random New Yorkers, 80 percent supported using automated enforcement cameras to deter speeding. That support is driving TransAlt’s newest campaign to slow down drivers. Backed by a coalition of families, parent-teacher associations and community groups like the All

Saints Episcopal Church and Public School 84, the Every School Campaign is asking the New York State Senate and Assembly for permission to install speed cameras in every New York City school zone, and keep them turned on 24 hours a day.

In 2014, it took a grueling campaign by TransAlt activists to convince Albany legislators to authorize the 140 speed cameras in use today. Even those are only permitted to operate during the school day, and for 30 minutes before and after school is in session.

Yet just 140 cameras have had an effect. After the cameras had been in operation for only a few months, the New York City Department of Transportation documented a 60 percent reduction in speeding at camera sites. Anecdotal, the evidence is the same: in the school district where 12-year-old Sammy Cohen Eckstein was killed by a speeding driver in 2013, 5-year-old Roark Bennett was struck in 2015 and survived. The difference? A 25 mph speed limit, and the public knowledge that speed cameras are out there to enforce it.

Despite the evidence, advocates expect that the Every School Campaign will be an uphill battle against cries of

controversy. Nearby Nassau and Suffolk counties nearly dismantled their safety cameras last year after some officials tried to spin automated enforcement as a “money grab.”

On May 10th, activists and members of Families for Safe Streets piled onto northbound buses in hopes of swaying Albany legislators in person. As of press time, the Every School Speed Safety Camera Act was still in legislative limbo, but one important group was convinced: 600,000 teachers, school bus drivers, custodians, and other faculty from K-12 classrooms, colleges and universities in New York State. The United Federation of Teachers and New York State United Teachers recently signed on in support of the campaign.

“If this were a vaccine and we knew that administering this vaccine to all kids would lead to a 60 percent reduction in the cause of mortality for our children, there would be no debate, there would be no politics,” said TransAlt Executive Director Paul Steely White at a press conference to launch the Every School Campaign. “There would be an urgency to apply this life-saving tool so that every kid in New York City is protected.” ■





Jay Walder is CEO of Motivate, the parent company of Citi Bike and 11 other bike share systems around the world.

## THE SIT-DOWN

# Jay Walder Saves Citi Bike

EVEN BEFORE IT LAUNCHED in 2013, Citi Bike struggled. Hurricane Sandy majorly damaged the brand-new bicycle fleet, software glitches set back its start date and Citi Bike's parent company scrambled to find new investors. That all turned around in late 2014, when former MTA Chair Jay Walder was brought on as the new CEO. Today, membership is on the rise and New Yorkers have pedaled over 48 million miles on Citi Bikes.

*Reclaim* sat down with Walder, a Queens native, to talk about the heart and soul of bike share in New York.

**In the past year, Citi Bike has improved service, accelerated station rollout and righted the financial ship. What's next on the horizon?**

We're working on making Citi Bike even bigger and better. We will be expanding in 2016 to the rest of the Upper East Side and the Upper West Side, Harlem, Red Hook, Gowanus, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill and Boerum Hill, a huge cross-section of the city. We are working to make our product better as well. We've done a new release of the app recently and we're continuing to work on app devel-

opment, which we find to be hugely valuable to our members. There is a whole program of ambassadors that we're going to start to roll out in many locations across the city. They're going to be able to help people, sign up members, work with tourists, and just continue to make Citi Bike more and more part of the fabric of New York.

**What does success look like from your perspective?**

What we saw last year and at the beginning of this year is an unbelievable measure of success. If you step back



three years, Citi Bike is a completely untested, unproven proposition. The question as to whether or not you are creating something that will matter to New Yorkers was unknown. There were people who believed in it, *Reclaim* readers would be a large number of those people, but no one could look at it and say, "This will work in New York."

Roll that forward and see that in the space of literally one year, you had ten million riders. I look at that and say, "We did it. We accomplished what everybody wanted to accomplish."

Can it continue to get bigger? Absolutely. But if one of the questions of success was, "Are we putting in place something that people are going to use and enjoy and make part of their life?" I think we are answering that question.

### Speaking of bigger, what will it take to bring Citi Bike to the Bronx and Staten Island?

As we're doing the expansion now, we're proving that we can take the vision beyond the small area south of 59th Street into a much bigger part of the city. We have a mayor now who has made it very, very clear that he has a five borough aspiration for Citi Bike, which I love. Now we just have to figure out how to build on success.

A year ago, when people asked me this question, my answer was that I can't even think about it; my only job walking in the door was to try and fix the darn thing. Now we're at a point where we should be engaging that question and figuring out how to do it. And how we do it in ways that doesn't just get bikes out to communities, but that make them a true part of the community. Every time we expand, we make that the measure of success. This is not a technology project, it's not a street project, it's a project that is a success when people say, "This is an important part of my community." That's what we really want it to be.

### Expansion will require new Citi Bike members. What's your strategy?

When we took over, frankly, the membership rates were falling. We stemmed

that tide in the middle of last year with improvements to Citi Bike, and then we grew it by 18%. We're up to 97,000 annual members now.

First, you have to have the right product, and you have to be sure, not just in the technology and the bike, but in your operations: you want the bikes to be in good repair, you want an app that's easy to use and you can rely on. Second is communication, reaching out to people to make sure they know how to use Citi Bike, that it's accessible.

The third lesson is really about engaging the community. One of the things I am proudest of that we did last year is that we didn't just put bikes into Bed-Stuy, we actually worked together with the Bed-Stuy Restoration Corporation to build up the presence of Citi Bike in the community. We worked last year to restructure a program we had with the New York City Housing Authority, so now people can sign up for \$5 a month. And we're working with the Housing Authority to publicize that, so it's more than something we point to in the fine print.

The beauty of New York is that it's not homogeneous; it has wonderful diversity and communities that are different. As we expand Citi Bike, we are trying to have an active presence with the people in every one of those communities. We're tailoring our messages, tailoring our programs, engaging in local activities and breaking down the barriers to bring people in. You have to have creativity, perseverance and stamina in doing that, and you have to be willing to try different things.

### Do you think Citi Bike has a role to play in safer streets?

Absolutely. Bike infrastructure is a huge part of what we're supportive of. I would give the City of New York tremendous credit for the strides that they've made in bike infrastructure, and I love that they're continuing to make strides. I don't think any of us should be satisfied with where we are today. Do we have a role in advocacy for doing that? Certainly. Does it make bik-

**"We have a mayor now who has made it very, very clear that he has a five borough aspiration for Citi Bike."**

ing better and safer? Certainly, and we feel strongly about that.

We're also looking for ways we can contribute beyond new bike lanes. We are testing now in one of our cities new reflective coating for bicycles, so they'll be more visible in the nighttime. One of the benefits of Motivate as the parent company of Citi Bike is that we can test in another city, learn from that, and then we can bring it to New York where we buy 3,000 bicycles a year. Think about the impact that we can have very quickly. Citi Bike is by far the largest bike share program in the country, but Motivate operates in 12 cities around the world. The innovations from different places can make their way back here.

### The last time you sat down with *Reclaim*, you were in charge of a less-beloved public transit system. How is Citi Bike different than managing the MTA?

It's more fun! I have to tell you, I love bike share. Last night, I rode over the Brooklyn Bridge and up the west side of Manhattan, passing person after person on a Citi Bike, and was really struck by the fact that they looked so happy. People love Citi Bike. It's a real kick, that people are enjoying it.

An amazing number of people who I don't know come up to me and proudly show me their Citi Bike key. It happens all the time. Even people I meet outside New York City reach in their pocket and take out a Citi Bike key to show me that they're Citi Bike members. People are just enormously charged and energized by it, and it's great. I really enjoy that about this job.





# VACCARO & WHITE

## REPRESENTING INJURED CYCLISTS AND OTHER CRASH VICTIMS

**Adam White** has represented New York cyclists, pedestrians and other crash victims for over twenty years, and has tried dozens of cases to a jury's verdict. Adam has been a Transportation Alternatives member and donor since 1995, and serves on the Legal Affairs Committee of the League of American Bicyclists. He has been an avid cyclist for over 25 years and commutes regularly by bicycle.

**Steve Vaccaro** was described by the New York Law Journal as "perhaps New York City's best-known lawyer advocate for bicyclist and pedestrian rights." Steve helped win enactment of the Right of Way Law, imposing criminal penalties on careless drivers. Steve serves on the Advisory Council of Transportation Alternatives, as Advocacy Coordinator for the Five Borough Bicycle Club, and is the founder and a Board Member of StreetsPAC, the cyclists' and pedestrians' political action committee.

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**No one ever did that to you with their MetroCard, I bet.**

[Laughs.] I probably shouldn't go any further in the comparison. But, that is true.

**Citi Bike is New York's only transportation system not subsidized by taxpayers. Will you push for public funding in the future?**

I don't think we should be opposed. We should think broadly about it. The beauty of where we are today is that we're having this discussion from a point of success. I have people coming up to me all the time saying, "When is Citi Bike coming to my neighborhood?" The fact of the matter is that we have something that people want to use. What we have to figure out with the City, and it is a partnership, is how we achieve that.

**Last question: We've heard of Citi Bikes washed up in the East River and ridden all the way to L.A. Do you have a favorite story?**

A little while after I started here, Stephen Colbert was taking over the Late Show, doing this in the Ed Sullivan Theater, and trying to think of a symbol for New York. This is the world's greatest city, right? It doesn't have any

shortage of symbols, right? We could, in a matter of seconds, come up with a ton of symbols of New York. So, what does he choose? He doesn't choose the Statue of Liberty or the Empire State Building or Grand Central Terminal. He chooses a Citi Bike. And I just thought it was so cool.

That goes to show what's so neat about Citi Bike, how much it is a part of the city. It's easy for Jay Walder to say this; it's what I do. It would be easy for Transportation Alternatives to say it, because we're aligned on this. But now you see, this is not Transportation Alternatives, or Jay Walder, it's Stephen Colbert, who wants to send a message to the United States of America that he's doing a show in New York and he chooses the Citi Bike. How cool is that?

**It is very cool!**

Stories just keep coming. People take their engagement photos on Citi Bike. I think that's the coolest thing. Last year when the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriages, there were profiles about how companies across the country were supporting Pride. The symbol that Citibank, the fourth largest bank in the United States, used was a Citi Bike that we had wrapped for Pride.

No one believed that Citi Bike would feel like it is the symbol of New York in such that way. The New York subway opened in 1904. It's been around for 112 years. When we talk about the institutions of New York, they've been here and established themselves. With Citi Bike, we're talking about two years. That's how fast this has occurred.

In a city where there's so much going on that you've got to light off fireworks to get attention and even the fireworks don't get attention, how is it that bicycles became this important in that space of time? The people, and Transportation Alternatives was a huge part of this, who saw this potential and realized that it was possible were so right. And I'm happy that we're probably exceeding the vision that they had.

I look forward in the coming months to celebrating our 100,000th member and our 10,000th bicycle. Every time we open up a neighborhood to Citi Bike, it's a really special day. In the summertime, every time we open up a new station, we ring a bell in the office, and it means something to us. When we're really cruising, you'll hear that bell go off five, six, seven time a day, and it's great. ■



## ACTIVISM

# News from the Committees

There is a crew of Transportation Alternatives activists in every borough riding their bikes, organizing their neighborhoods, fighting for local change and having a ton of fun.



## Chrystie Street

Activists spent the Chinese Lunar New Year handing out hundreds of small red envelopes with chocolate coins, coupons for the bike shop down the street and a flyer for the next meeting of Community Board 3, where a plan for a two-way protected bike lane on Chrystie Street was roundly applauded.



"I presented 600+ #FixChrystie petition signatures to Community Board 3 when they were about to vote on the plan for a two-way protected bike lane. Then I turned to the room packed with 50+ people and asked, 'Who's excited about this plan?' Almost everyone in the room cheered openly."

*Sophie Maerowitz*



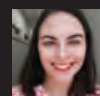
## Richmond Terrace

A "Horrors of Richmond Terrace" open mic night at Everything Goes Bookstore and Cafe put activists and neighbors on the stage to talk about what it's like to bike and walk on the local arterial route; a horror, according to the firsthand accounts.



"We are pressuring the DOT to show dignity to the thousands of residents who live and work along the current terrifying moonscape of Richmond Terrace, a lifeline to Staten Island's North Shore, and make it a street where we can thrive."

*Rose Uscianowski*



"Meeker Avenue is an important link between Greenpoint and Williamsburg, but right now, it feels more like an extension of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. Our campaign wants to make the street work for everyone, whether they're walking, biking or driving."

*Becca Kaplan*





"I am fighting for the Complete the Concourse campaign because I envision a boulevard that



breathes new hope into our West Bronx neighborhoods, with safe ways for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers to access the rich cultural institutions and the high density of residences that line the Grand Concourse."

*Edgar Cabrera*



## The Grand Concourse

Counting potholes and double parked cars adds up quickly on the Grand Concourse, but that's the fun of the "First Friday Action Ride," which did a lap of the street in May. With another group bike ride scheduled for the first Friday in June, it's clear this street needs more space for bikes.



"We need to add space for people on 111th Street, and that means that our campaign is standing up against those who think parking and automotive elbow room is more important than safety, community needs and wants, and space to be yourself right next to an amazing park."

*Samuel Santaella*



## 111th Street

Assembly Member Francisco Moya dissed the DOT's plan for a new bike lane on 111th Street, but local residents aren't giving up. In fact, they've attended every Community Board 4 meeting for ten months, asking when fixing the street will be back on the agenda.



## Meeker Avenue

Glitter paint, markers and magazine collages were the tools on-hand for a colorful sign-making party before Community Board 1 voted on safety improvements for Meeker Avenue. With those signs up in the back of the room, the activist-approved plan passed with flying colors.

To get involved in your local activist committee, visit [transalt.org/neighborhoods](http://transalt.org/neighborhoods)





# Welcome to New Bike City

**T**HE CAMERA ATTACHED TO THE FRONT rack of Paul Vogel's bicycle has captured a lot since he strapped it on in 2014. There's the miles of fresh green paint, hundreds of bollards and tree beds protecting new bike lanes, and the thousands of novice Citi Bikers who totter a bit as he rides by. There are also cavernous potholes, jutting construction plates, and enough cars parked in the bike lane to inspire a Twitter account (@D00rZ0ne) dedicated to documenting the infractions and infrastructure failures.

This is the duality of New York City cycling in its teenage

years: aspirational and awkward, confident and kind of a mess, packed with bike lanes that are innovative and imperfect.

With the help of activists like Paul Vogel, we are getting a clearer picture of how to build a more perfect bike lane. Meanwhile, Transportation Alternatives is keeping up the everyday fight for basic safety, accessibility and interconnectedness. Advocacy will guarantee bicycling's tomorrow — and it's backed by a bold vision for citywide bike share, side streets so calm you can ride down the middle, and a connected network of low-stress cycling routes that are easy to access.





As for the future, bicycling's next age is predicted to be much more mature, free of tabloid hysteria, bike wars and maybe even red lights. There may not be hoverboards or flying bicycles, but we can see some advancements on the horizon that would make even George Jetson ditch his flying car.

Will New York's most fantastical bike future come to pass? Our crystal ball shows a hearty yes, in part because the safer streets that TransAlt is fighting for today are driving some truly innovative ideas for the future.

## Mo' Progress, Mo' Problems

In a recent article, *Vox* reported that no one in the United States has died using bike share, even though systems have been launched in a whopping 94 cities since 2007. In New York, the average number of cyclist injuries and fatalities appears to be holding steady, despite the number of New Yorkers who ride a bike growing apace with hundreds of new bike share stations and miles of new protected bike lanes. Today, well over half a million of us hop on our bicycles several times a month and the number of daily bicycle commuters has doubled since the City of New York began installing protected bike lanes in 2008.

Remarkably, this period of unprecedented growth coexists alongside an endless number of imperfections (a.k.a. the trash bags, construction workers and police cars in your bike lane), and is inspiring an unrelenting pace of research and development. Consider the machine alone: in 2016, companies are expected to release thousands of new bicycle models, including those that (1) can collapse to the size of an umbrella, (2) are constructed entirely of cardboard, and (3) fold into a self-contained bike lock. The end of the bike wars, it appears, is a boom time, too.

## Clear the Path

Riding in New York can seem like a stop-and-go enterprise where your brakes get more exercise than your thighs, but a growing field of traffic technologists are looking to give

cyclists the green light, and the next one, and the one after that, based on the simple premise that if bicycling is more efficient, more people will ride.

Retiming signals to give cyclists the greenwave is just one possible future. Another is a technology used on rural roads that could easily be tucked into urban bike lanes: demand-actuated lights are triggered by a detector embedded in the asphalt, which responds to conductive materials — a steel car, sure, but your aluminum bicycle rim will work, too — and tells the traffic signal that someone is ready and waiting at the red.

Transportation Alternatives also sees cameras, which New York City already employs to enforce bus lane, red light and speed violations, as a perfect future tool to clear a path for cyclists. Bike lane enforcement cameras aren't in use anywhere in the U.S. yet, but the technology could someday dissuade drivers from using the bike lane like a parking lot.

"As the number of dedicated bike lanes grows, the scope of the problem becomes more apparent, and there is every reason to believe that technology will one day be a valuable tool to protect bicyclists," explains Charles Territo, Vice President of American Traffic Solutions, which supplies the city's current camera enforcement programs. "Plus, cameras provide data, in this case about how bike lanes are used, and how effective they really are."

## Go Vroom?

The single fastest-growing age group in New York City is people over 65, with the population of senior citizens expected to reach 1.84 million by 2030 — and these are just some of the New Yorkers who may lack the oomph required to get a bicycle started. Those older New Yorkers, along with residents of hilly neighborhoods and millions more, may soon be able to take a cue from eco-conscious car drivers. The adoption of electric bicycles is going to make cycling a more affordable, accessible, and realistic replacement for automobiles, offering mobility and freedom despite age, terrain, or physical ability.

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Electric bikes have two wheels, a small electric motor and top speeds of 20 mph, which federal laws regulate in the same category as human-powered bicycles. However, e-bikes are currently illegal in New York City, a fact that Marco Conner, TransAlt's Legislative Director, is working to change during the 2016 legislative session.

"There is a bill currently in committee that would distinguish between safe electric bicycles and high-speed motorcycles and scooters, and bring New York State in line with federal law," explained Conner. "By clarifying a little bit of language in the law, we can make it possible for so many more people to ride bikes."

Bicycle builders are putting big design dollars into taking e-bikes beyond the simple models on the road today. Expect future e-bikes to feature sensors, lights and GPS built into the frame; even pace metrics and data could come right out of your bike. Solar companies are looking at space-efficient ways to power it all. Roadways built from photovoltaic cells are anticipated in the near future, taking advantage of wide open road space — like, say, the Sheridan Expressway — to generate electricity, which e-bikes could use to keep moving.

## If Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs Had a Baby

For many New Yorkers, commuting by bicycle can take twice as long as driving or taking the subway. It's not just that New York City is vast; highways and train lines save time by traveling over or under surface congestion to trace the most direct route between places. That efficiency doesn't transfer to the street grid that cyclists get stuck on. Until now.

Introducing the bicycle speedway.

A bicycle speedway is like a highway for bikes, providing a clear path between common places so cyclists can travel exactly as fast as they can pedal. In Germany, a dedicated bicycle speedway 60 miles long will soon mirror the autobahn, connecting 10 cities. London also announced it would build one to fight congestion inside city limits.

Sarah Lawrence College Professor Amanda Schachter recently asked students in her urban design course to apply the bicycle speedway concept to some currently impossible New York City bicycle commutes, piggybacking their designs on existing infrastructure. One student routed bicyclists to Manhattan from Co-op City, with a few miles of bike paths built into the Cross Bronx Expressway and Pelham Bay Parkway. Another took riders into Manhattan from Far Rockaway along the tracks of the Long Island Rail Road.

"A lot of old infrastructure, like elevated subways and highways, was overdesigned. Why not use those lines and extra bits of right of way to make bike highways?" said Schachter. "If there was space for bicycles that was separate but followed the same route, there would be the possibility of bicycling from much more far-flung places."

## Rolling Forward

Transportation Alternatives thinks these big ideas and messy conditions are linked; forward-looking concepts are the magic ingredient for fixing the imperfect bike lanes and other discomforts of bicycling today. Issues like sloppy construction or drivers parked in the bike lane are deeply local, and often the fight for one block is a place where progress gets mired. But a focus on big ideas for cycling's citywide future can drive the pace of fixing the small stuff.

For decades, the advocates for bicycling in New York were pothole-obsessed. Even the earliest incarnations of cycling clubs organized themselves to petition for better paved roads. Today, as we grow out of cycling's teenage years, we at Transportation Alternatives are keeping our sights on a broader horizon, pushing for innovative new ways to put more people on two wheels. And thanks to Paul Vogel, and thousands of TransAlt activists like him, we're keeping an eye on the local ballet of the sidewalk, and streets, too. This is how we roll forward — on our bicycles, of course. ■

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## COMMUTER PROFILE

## Shane Ferro

**You recently raced a helicopter across Manhattan on a Citi Bike. How did that come about?**

For some reason, much of Midtown was going to be shut down and it was going to be hard to get across town. I think the pope was in town and the UN was happening. This helicopter company tweeted that they were having a promotion: \$100 to take a helicopter from the East Side to the West Side. I thought, that's dumb, I could do it faster on a bike. I took it to my video team at the *Huffington Post* and proposed that we challenge them. Less than 24 hours later, it happened. I very narrowly won.

**How narrowly did you win?**

It all came down to where we decided to meet. We couldn't just race from helipad to helipad, because no one is ever just going to the helipad. We chose to finish at the Citi Bike station outside 601 West 26th Street, a big building where a lot of people work. I biked past the people from the helicopter walking down 11th Avenue, about a block away. So I barely won.

**But if they lose points for carbon footprint...**

Then I won by a longshot.

**What do you ride when you're not on Citi Bike?**

I have a Surly Cross Check. My race bike is a Felt FC. I do road racing and cyclocross racing, for the most part. Because my office has indoor bike parking, I commute in on my race bike sometimes, because it has gears and my Surly doesn't and I live in the Bronx, which is downhill from Manhattan. I usually take the West Side Greenway.

**And what's cyclocross?**

It's a cross between road racing and mountain bike racing that's on grass and dirt. You ride what looks like a



Shane Ferro is a journalist, competitive cyclist and faster than a helicopter.

road bike with a little fatter tires. There are also obstacles on the course.

**Sounds rugged. Better or worse than New York City potholes?**

Depends on the course. They've been doing construction on the West Side Greenway near 79th Street and it's closed sometimes so you have to get off your bike, walk up the stairs, then walk down the stairs and get back on. That's exactly like cyclocross.

**For a long time, competitive cycling was largely considered a male sport. Is that changing?**

It's slowly getting better but in an up-and-down kind of way. This year, I've seen fewer races for women because last year we had three races on the same day and there weren't enough women at all three of them. We demand more, but when there isn't quite enough demand to keep up with what race promoters are putting out there, they say, "Oh, there's not enough women, we're going to quit."

The internet has also been a really positive force in showing how the

bike industry can be somewhat sexist. There are a lot of women very dedicated to changing how this sport portrays women, and people are starting to pay attention.

**When you're not racing, you write about business for the *Huffington Post*. Any thoughts on the role of bicycles in the New Economy?**

We're seeing the rise of the city again and the redevelopment of a lot of urban centers. Bicycles tend to be the best way to get around in urban centers. As the number of people biking is going up, we're seeing a change for the better. Like in New York, bikes clearly won the bike wars, and the people who said that bikes lanes weren't going to work, they've quieted down. The bike lanes are great. We need more.

**Bikes are part of the gig workforce too. With non-traditional commuting times and locations, bikes make sense.**

And the infrastructure is so much easier to build. The 2nd Avenue bike lane definitely went up faster than the 2nd Avenue subway! ■



BEHIND THE SCENES

## Talking Bike 2020

IT'S NOT EASY TO BE THE FACE of bicycling in New York City, but with a community meeting on their calendar nearly every night, TransAlt organizers are often a stand-in for pedaling New Yorkers, helmet hair and all. It's less about a community board vote on tomorrow's bike lane, and more about the next generation of cyclists and the city they will inherit.

*Reclaim* convinced two of those indefatigable organizers, **Kristen Miller**, who represents TransAlt in Brooklyn, and **Jaime Moncayo**, who speaks for TransAlt in Queens, to take a break and chat with us about commuting, technology, the future of cycling, and their daily work to, as they put it, get more butts on bikes.

**Tell us about your day. What does an organizer do?**

**Kristen:** I talk to people and I share information. My goal is always to help people realize what the problem is, and their power to reach solutions. Often that's supporting them or pushing them to do things they may be nervous about.

**Jaime:** I think knowledge is the biggest obstacle to change. Most people who don't like something in their neighborhood don't know how to get involved. We can come in and say, "It's good that you're upset about this. There's a meeting where you can affect it. Go!"

**Kristen:** Twice a year, we've been hosting a class to teach people about starting a campaign. We do a social media training, an anti-oppression training about intersectionality of issues. We

explain the strategy of forming coalitions and mapping campaigns; picking who your target is, what your target cares about, who can make your target move.

**During his campaign, Mayor de Blasio said that by 2020, 6 percent of all trips in New York City would be people riding bikes. Recently, he scaled that back to 3 percent. Any thoughts for the Mayor about how to get more New Yorkers to ride?**

**Kristen:** It's simple. You add more bike lanes. That's the trick to getting people on their bikes. You just make it safer.

**Jaime:** Infrastructure in general is really powerful. I know tons of folks who would have never bought a bike but got on Citi Bike for example, because it's convenient and cheap, or



they felt safe to try riding because there was a protected bike lane. The expansion of these things affects so much. In every neighborhood the infrastructure extends to, that's new people on bikes.

### What role can technology play in introducing more New Yorkers to bicycling?

**Jaime:** The first time I biked into Manhattan, I figured out a route using Google Maps and then watched videos that people had made with GoPros on their helmets of them navigating that route. Immediately I felt I could do it because I could picture it. If you had a video of how to safely commute from Rego Park to Flushing on a bike, people would see they could do that. If you put those videos on Citi Bike stations, it would be eye opening.

**Kristen:** Especially with so many young people moving to the city, and new industries not necessarily centered in Manhattan, we're more likely to go to work in our own boroughs. That alone will increase cycling when you don't have as far to go, when biking is a lot faster than taking the train.

### Are there barriers that keep people from riding bikes?

**Jaime:** I think it's really important to ask people why they don't bike, but understanding what that means in practical terms. For example, certain amenities stop existing when you go further out from Manhattan. Even something as simple as a lack of bike racks matters. Someone could tell you, "I would ride my bike anywhere, but where would I leave it?"

**Kristen:** Exactly. When someone points out that this is a city where there's no significant bike storage, then you identify that as an infrastructure issue. If we want to increase biking, we should know why people aren't biking. That means asking the right questions but also taking action on the answers.

**Jaime:** For most people, there's probably not just one reason they don't bike; it's because the distance is too far and they're worried about where they're going to leave their bike and they don't

know how to carry stuff back home.

**Kristen:** The nature of the ride matters. Even if it's short, a terrifying bike ride on terrible streets is enough to make you not want to ride. But you'd be willing to take a longer route if it was pleasant and safe.

**Jaime:** You encourage people to bike by showing, not telling. You see people running errands on a Citi Bike, and you realize you can do that, too. Start with shorter rides, a ride in your neighborhood, then a ride into a different neighborhood, and you slowly feel more comfortable.

**"You are probably the best person in your friends' lives to encourage them to get out of their car and ride a bike."**

### So it's bigger than bike lanes?

**Jaime:** Streets are public space, and a bike lane is one better use of space. It's an opening of possibility, like "This space could be anything! Put a tree in there!"

**Kristen:** I try not to talk about bike lanes without talking about making streets more neighborly, slowing down the speed of cars, activating the space, bringing people out, encouraging more people to be active. Even if you come to TransAlt because you're a die-hard cyclist, you're going to realize there's more to this than that.

**Jaime:** I had a really interesting conversation with an activist the other day about how a lot of our work is about giving people the opportunity to make their neighborhoods look how they want them to look. We talk about bike lanes, street crossings, expanded medians, bulb-outs and all of that, but it all points to the idea that this is your community and it should look however you want it to.

### What can *Reclaim* readers do to help?

**Jaime:** You can, and you should, encourage people in your social circle to bike. That sounds really lame, but if you're a TransAlt member and you ride, you are probably the best person in your friends' lives to encourage them to get out of their car and ride a bike.

**Kristen:** Riding with your friends is a good way to help people feel in control about safety and danger. I still avoid roads in my neighborhood because when I first started to ride, people told me not to ride there.

**Jaime:** And don't be snobs; help them. Just following someone through city streets can make a world of difference. Seeing how they navigate the intersections, you're learning the best way to do things.

**Kristen:** Plus, of course, if you want your neighbors to ride, you should advocate for better conditions in your neighborhood. Ridership in neighborhoods with protected bike lane spikes because people want to ride in protected lanes.

**Jaime:** And know that we're already winning. The bike wars are over. Between Kristen and me alone, right now we've got six active campaigns for new bike lanes. More support from folks making calls, going to meetings, tweeting, means we can stay that course.

### 2020 is only four years away. But what about 2040?

**Jaime:** No one bikes in 2040. We're all on hoverboards.

**Kristen:** Also, they've cured helmet hair.

**Jaime:** I would love if in the future biking was like driving. Like you would never say, "I'm a driver." In 2040, cycling is so normal that you don't even identify as a cyclist.

**Kristen:** Also, there will be no more bike lanes. Instead, there are so many bikers and people walking on the roads that they're setting the pace, and car drivers have to push a button when they want to cross the street. ■



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Hill Park is one of the most unaltered locales in New York. It's also Manhattan's best place to spot the city's growing population of bald eagles. Leave your fixie at home; it's hilly up there.

## PELHAM BAY PARK

Get lost on five miles of paved bike trails or hike the 13 miles of saltwater shoreline in New York's largest park. Keep an eye out for osprey, count the glacial boulders deposited in the park 20,000 years



ago or simply marvel at the ecological diversity. In just a few turns of the crank, you can see flowering meadows, dense forests, marshlands and rocky shores.

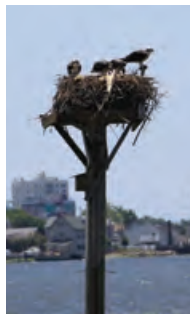
## STATEN ISLAND GREENBELT

Actually a series of contiguous parks and greenspaces, the Greenbelt is home to forested hills and kettle ponds, plus a wealth of hawk, snake, turtle, frog and deer species. It all peaks on Todt Hill, the Eastern Seaboard's highest



elevation south of Maine. Bring your mountain bike for the dirt and gravel multi-use trail.

## JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE



You and your bike can break free from the constraints of directional paths on the empty runways of Floyd Bennett Field, a decommissioned airstrip adjacent to Jamaica Bay. But birds are the main attraction in the 18,000-acre wetland estuary; take a walk along the boardwalks and mudflats to spot egret, heron, plover, sandpiper, osprey, ibis and owl.



## THE LAST WORD

# Albany, We're Ready for Our Close-Up

By Eben Weiss, a.k.a. Bike Snob

YOU CAN TELL PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING YOU NEED to know about a city by watching its children arrive at school.

For example, in Amsterdam, parents shuttle their little ones in *bakfietsen* and other similar human-powered contraptions. I've seen it. It's adorable, like they're delivering a box of chicks on wheels.

"Awww," you think to yourself. "This must be a society that places a value on childhood and human life."

Here in New York City it's a little different, and the scene outside of school is less Easter basket and more active troop deployment. Double- and triple-parked cars, minivans, and SUVs surround the perimeter of the school, disgorging educational combatants laden with backpacks full of learning provisions. Beyond the safety of the perimeter, crossing guards in Hi-Viz flak jackets halt the attack of rush-hour traffic just long enough to urge the second wave of the juvenile infantry across the street. Then come the great big yellow troop transporters, and eventually the surge is over and a fragile peace falls over the school...until dismissal time when the army begins its retreat.

"I love the smell of car exhaust in the morning!" you shout to your child over the cacophony of horns.

School staff and crossing guards work incredibly hard to get our kids in and out of school safely, and they do a fantastic job. Their greatest challenge is New York City motor vehicle traffic. Outside of diseases, the number one killer of New York City kids is drivers.

Kids and their schools, and their parents, need help.

Back in 2013, the state graciously allowed New York City to install 20 speed cameras in school zones, and our erstwhile mayor Michael Bloomberg celebrated at PS 81 in the Bronx, where the city had found 96 percent of drivers were speeding (the remaining 4 percent probably slowed briefly in order to rummage for their cellphones).

"For the first time ever — sounds hard to believe — but for the first time ever, we're going to be able to install speed cameras at up to 20 locations," he said.

Hard to believe indeed. The New York City Department of Education is the largest in the United States. It runs more than 1,800 schools and teaches over 1.1 million students. Only 20 cameras to help protect all these kids? Pathetic. It's the 21st century! There are probably more than 20 GoPros in your nearest skate park on any given afternoon.

Clearly we needed more speed cameras, and soon the program was expanded to allow for a measly 140 of them. The

last of these cameras was installed just before the first day of school in September 2015, meaning we've now got approximately .08 speed cameras for every school in the system.

In other words, if speed cameras were refreshing bottles of Snapple, each student would receive roughly .002 of an ounce of delicious, sugary safety.

(Oh, also, the cameras are only legally allowed to operate on school days, because everybody knows city kids never hang out at the schoolyard on weekends, and instead play at home in their lush, giant backyards.)

Meanwhile, in 2014 alone, this paltry smattering of cameras issued 471,625 tickets, resulting in over \$23 million in fines — and that's before all 140 were even online.

This is because people in this city drive like freaking lunatics.

Statistics show these cameras are improving traffic safety where they're deployed, yet not everybody likes speed cameras in school zones. The Patrolmen's Benevolent Association feels they are "no substitute for live policing," which is true, because so far no camera can replicate the sporadic, haphazard ticketing performed by a human being.

As a parent I'm regularly stunned by the reckless driving I see around schools, so placing a camera in every single school zone in the city seems like it should be considered the bare minimum as far as keeping kids safe. And speed cameras in school zones don't even begin to address the way people drive outside of these zones when kids are present. Drivers honk at my son's school bus in the morning while he's boarding it, or else they lose patience altogether and simply speed around it. The sun's been up for only half an hour already and the bus driver stops for maybe ten seconds.

That level of impatience is a cry for help.

While I'd never deprive my son of riding the big yellow school bus (he's made his desire to do so quite clear for as long as he could talk), twice a week I pick him up from school by bicycle, which always makes me nostalgic for my visit to Amsterdam. I'm unusual among the other parents in their cars, but I don't want to be. I also don't think I would be alone if the city's streets were safer.

Someday this war's gonna end. But in order for that to happen, some drivers are gonna have to smile and say "cheese." ■

Right now, Transportation Alternatives is begging the nice people in Albany to put a speed camera in every school zone.

ASK YOUR LEGISLATOR TO SUPPORT  
THE CAMPAIGN AT [EVERYSCHOOL.NYC](http://EVERYSCHOOL.NYC).





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